

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DHAHRA 00271 060918Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04  
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DIWY-01 /032 W  
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R 051355Z MAR 77  
FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5290  
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, EGEN, SA  
SUBJECT: MORE ON SAG CLAMPDOWN ON COMPANIES EMPLOYING WOMEN

REF: DHAHRAN 0187

1. REFTEL REPORTED MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S CRACKDOWN  
ON LOCAL COMPANIES WHICH EMPLOY WOMEN. MANY OF THE  
WOMEN WORKERS, OF COURSE, ARE EMPLOYED BY AMERICAN  
COMPANIES WHICH ARE CLEARLY WORRIED BY CEASE AND  
DESISIT ORDERS ISSUED TO SOME FIRMS OPERATING IN THIS  
CONSULAR DISTRICT. A FEW COMPANIES HAVE TAKEN  
EXTREME STEP OF DISCHARGING ALL THEIR FEMALE EMPLOYEES,  
AND ARAMCO HAS ORDERED ALL ITS CONTRACTORS TO FIRE  
ALL WIVES OF ARAMCO EMPLOYEES THEY ARE PRESENTLY  
EMPLOYING. EVEN MAJOR LOCAL COMPANIES, LIKE THOSE  
OF KHALED TURKI (MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION FOR  
JUBAIL AND YNDBO) AND SULIMAN OLAYAN, HAVE NOT BEEN  
EXEMPTED FROM THE ORDER.

2. TWO LARGEST AMERICAN COMPANIES AFFECTED, BECHTEL  
AND NORTHRUP (AND NORTHRUP'S CONTRACTORS OPERATING HERE  
IN SUPPORT OF THE PEACEHAWK PROGRAM) ARE MAKING EVERY  
EFFORT TO RETAIN THEIR FEMALE EMPLOYEES. BECHTEL,  
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PAGE 02 DHAHRA 00271 060918Z

WHICH ACTS AS AGENT OF SAG IN PROJECT-MANAGING THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF NEW INDUSTRIAL CITY OF JUBAIL, ORIGINALLY  
THOUGHT THAT ROYAL COMMISSION DIRECTOR-GENERAL WOULD  
RESOLVE PROBLEM WITH HIS SUPERIORS (CROWN PRINCE FAHD  
AND PLANNING MINISTER NAZER) IN RIYADH. UPON HIS  
RETURN FROM APPEALING BECHTEL'S CASE IN RIYADH, HOWEVER,  
THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ADVISED BECHTEL THAT HE WAS

WITHDRAWING ENTIRELY FROM MATTER AND US COMPANY WOULD HAVE TO RESOLVE MATTER BY ITSELF. BECHTEL THEN ASKED SON OF ITS SAUDI PARTNER, KHALID OLAYAN, TO PURSUE MATTER WITH SAG AUTHORITIES IN RIYADH. OLAYAN RETURNED THIS WEEK EMPTY-HANDED BUT COMMENTED THAT HE IS "OPTIMISTIC" THAT SOLUTION TO PROBLEM WOULD BE FOUND. IN MEANTIME, BECHTEL HAS TRUCE WITH MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVE, WHO HAS AGREED TO DELAY ENFORCING HIS FEBRUARY 15 ORDER UNTIL SUCH TIME AS BECHTEL HAS APPEALED DECISION IN RIYADH.

3. NORTHRUP'S APPEAL FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE CEASE AND DESIST ORDER APPARENTLY IS MAKING GREATER HEADWAY. ACCORDING TO NORTHRUP, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND AVIATION (MODA) AGREED ORALLY IN 1973 TO US CONTRACTOR EMPLOYING WOMEN ON ITS PROJECTS. IN A LATE-FEBRUARY, 1977 EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN USMTM AND MODA, DEPUTY MINISTER PRINCE TURKI REAFFIRMED THAT COMMITMENT BUT NOTED THAT, AS BEFORE, NOTHING IS TO BE PUT IN WRITING. ON FEBRUARY 28 HE TOLD USMTM'S GENERAL AHMANN THAT HE HOPES TO RESOLVE THE MATTER AND THAT NORTHRUP AND ITS CONTRACTORS SHOULD CONTINUE TO EMPLOY WOMEN. USMTM'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS SPECIALIST SUBSEQUENTLY ADVISED PROVINCIAL MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVE OF MODA'S INTEREST AND LATTER AGREED TO TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION UNTIL MATTER RESOLVED BETWEEN HIS MINISTRY AND MODA. MEANWHILE, NORTHRUP'S GOVERFMENRT RELATIONS OFFICER ALSO PURSUED MATTER WITH MODA AND WAS GIVEN SAME REPLY, ONE ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION WWAAS FURNISHED -- IF MINISTRY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 DHAHRA 00271 060918Z

OF INTERIOR OFFICIALS MAKE MOVE TO ENFORCE IT ORDER, NORTHRUP SHOULD IMMEDIATELY REPORT MATTER TO COLONEL WHO IS CHIEF OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE IN EASTERN PROVINCE.

4. COMMENT: AS NOTED EARLIER, AMERICAN COMPANIES ARE CONCERNED AS TO IMPACT STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF BAN ON WOMEN EMPLOYEES WILL HAVE ON THEIR OPERATIONS. WE BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE OVERRACTING TO SITUATION BUT WE FIND TPEIR WORRIES UNDERSTANDABLE. WE ARE ADVISING THEM TO MOVE SLOWLY AND CONSIDER THE CURRENT BAN AS A TEMPORARY SAG MOVE TO KEEP CONSERVATIVE MOSLEM ELEMENTS HAPPY, BUT WHICH MAY WELL BE GENERALLY IGNORED AFTER BRIEF FLURRY OF ACTIVITY. ARAMCO'S GOV'T RELATIONS REP IN RIYADH BELIEVES THAT EFFORTS ARE AFOOT WITHING SAG TO REVERSE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR INSTRUCTIONS, WHICH ARE PURPORTED TO HAVE BEEN SIGNED PERSONALLY BY MINISTER OF INTERIOR, PRINCE NAYEF. IT WOULD SEEM MORE IN KEEPING WITH SAUDI PRACTICE,

HOWEVER, IF THE ISSUE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO FADE  
AWAY FOR ANOTHER YEAR OR TWO RATHER THAN THAT A  
MINISTER'S RULING WOULD BE REVERSED.  
BUSHNELL

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** EMPLOYMENT, WOMEN, BUSINESS FIRMS  
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**Decapton Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decapton Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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